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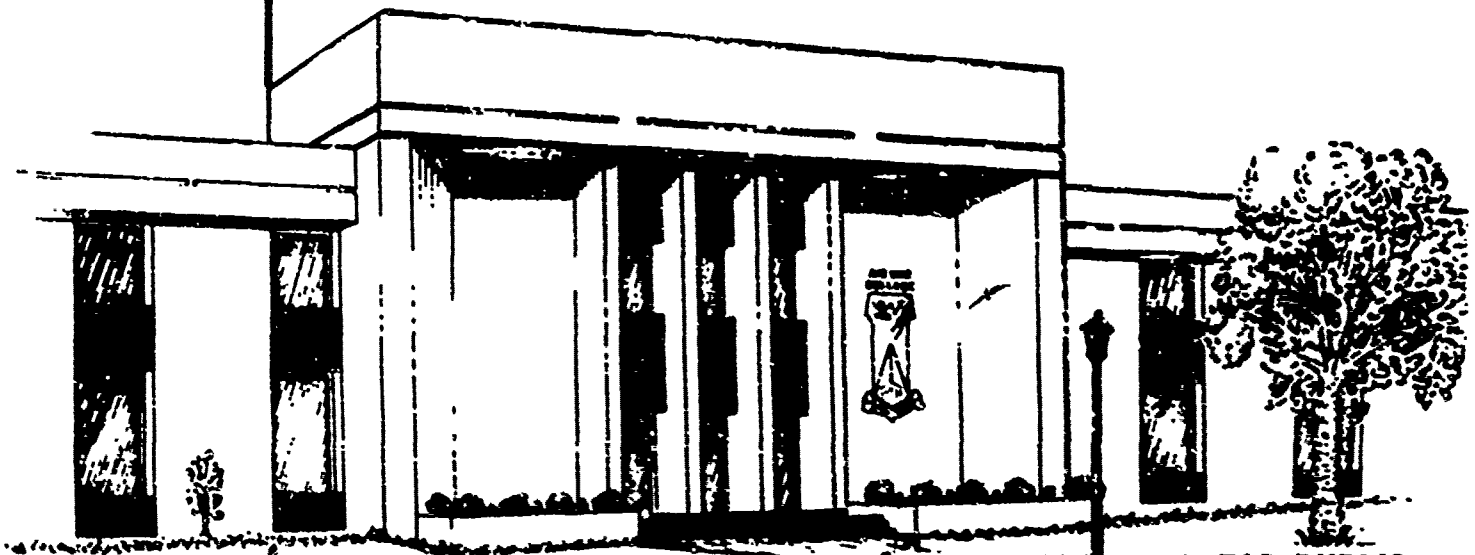
A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

by

Joel D. Bonewitz
Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM

REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Dr. James Mowbray

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: A National Strategy for an Uncertain Future. AUTHOR: Joel D. Bonewitz, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF.

Given obvious budget limitations, ~~our~~ defense strategy must focus our limited resources in those areas of greatest threat to our national interests. For years the ends and means of our national defense strategy have been out of balance. Given the changed nature of war and a remarkably different threat environment, we can achieve a balanced strategy. A long, global war no longer seems feasible due to cost, destructiveness, and limitations imposed by world and domestic public opinion. Unlike the world of the late 1940s and early 1950s when the strategy of containment was adopted, the threat today is low intensity conflict. Although the United States must maintain a nuclear force for deterrence, the United States should not be preparing to fight a large-scale war in central Europe. Instead, compelled by budget cuts, the force structure should be modified into a lighter, more mobile force with the ability to respond quickly anywhere in the world. It is essential that allies and adversaries see unmistakable resolve, and recognize that the elements of national power we are prepared to bring to bear are more than adequate to ensure that our national interests are served.

→ Keywords: Military strategy, United States, National defense, Wartime, Thesis. (RWS) ← iii

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years critics have become increasingly vocal over what they see as a lack of an overall national defense strategy for the United States. It has been suggested with considerable justification that "we have four separate Service strategies, loosely cobbled together by the JCS, which only masquerade in the guise of a genuine unified strategy."¹ Some, such as the Honorable Newt Gingrich, suggest that our problem is a "lack of strategic vision."² Others suggest that our adoption of Antoine-Henri Jomini's principles of war has resulted in a separation of strategy from the political and social realms.³ Another view is that instead of a strategy the United States today has "a vast and separate accumulation of old and new military obligations unattended by the military means sufficient to fulfill them."⁴

The world has undergone remarkable political and technological changes in the years since World War II. However, in spite of the changes on the international scene, there is a risk that the United States will continue to espouse a defense strategy rooted firmly in the past and not ready for the challenges of an uncertain future. As General David C.

Jones, USAF (ret.), former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said, "Since fresh approaches to strategy tend to threaten an institution's interests and self-image, it is often more comfortable to look to the past than to seek new ways to meet the challenges of the future."⁶ Ambassador Robert Komer believes "the military has taken itself out of the strategy business because it has been unwilling to recommend the hard decisions needed about allocations among the Services."⁷

Hard decisions are being forced upon the services as the United States military will certainly face lean budgets in the coming years. History has shown that "rivalry over the distribution of scarce defense resources often leads to the subordination of rational strategic needs to the institutional bureaucratic requirements of the military services."⁸ Given very obvious budget limitations, our national defense strategy must focus our increasingly limited resources in those areas of greatest threat to our national interests. We must anticipate that our force structure will change. Change implies uncertainty, and uncertainty implies risk--"potentially, every ill-considered and reckless cut may cost millions of lives."⁹ Almost 25 years ago, Lt Col Benschine, in an Air War College professional study examining technology and strategy, observed that a fundamental factor in the consideration of strategy and technology is professional advice--sound military judgement.¹⁰ This is equally valid today for we recognize that in the absence of professional advice our future force structure may

be dictated by Congress on strictly budgetary or political grounds. Our national military leaders must be willing to make the hard decisions even when what is right goes against their parochial interests. Now is a time for far-sighted thinking and true leadership.

In the early 1960's, the military historians-political scientists Bernard and Fawn Brodie observed that the "choice of strategies and of weapons systems is not only immensely more difficult than it has ever been before, but also involves questions that are deeply and essentially baffling, even to the ablest minds."¹² Today, nearly 30 years later, the task of choosing a strategy and the weapon systems to support it has not become any easier. However, changes in the nature of war, changes in the threats to this nation, and constrained budgets compel us to step up to this formidable task.

The purpose of this paper is to propose a national defense strategy for an uncertain future. To design a defense strategy, we must 1) define our national interests, 2) examine the evolution of the current defense strategy designed to protect these national interests, 3) understand the nature of war and how it has changed, and 4) identify the threats to our national interests as we expect them to be manifested in the future. Based on this analysis, I will synthesize a recommended national defense strategy to face an uncertain future.

Study Limitations

This paper has been written with certain accepted limitations. The first of these limitations was the desire to refrain from using any classified sources. Thus, all material used was drawn from the open literature. The second was the snapshot nature of this work in a very rapidly changing world. As we have all seen, events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have been moving at breakneck speed. Likewise, decisions are being made in both the East and West which may radically change the environment in which this paper was originally formulated. In other words, this paper could be significantly overtaken by events. This is no different than the challenge faced by our national decision makers today, who must not avoid the problem as being too difficult. This study was undertaken with the belief that the value of examining these issues far outweighed the risk of a moot final product.

Vital National Interests

The first, and some would say, most critical step toward proposing a defense strategy is to define the national interests the strategy must protect. *National interests* are defined as "relatively unchanging ends sought by states in the international arena."¹¹ A vital national interest is "one on which the nation is unwilling to compromise" and "one over which a nation would go to war."¹² While we can accept these two conditions, we must look further to provide a foundation

for development of a national strategy to protect those yet undefined vital national interests.

The most basic foundation for our national interests can be found in our Declaration of Independence where our forefathers declared

that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.¹³

These concepts of equality, life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness are further expanded by the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States.

We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessing of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.¹⁴

From the simple words in these two historic documents, we can begin to see the foundation upon which our national interests are built.

Some refer to this foundation as our "national purpose." It is at this point where we try to identify those national interests that support our national purpose that we begin to have difficulties. In the abstract, the idea of national interests is understandable, even if its academic explanation can be exceedingly complicated.¹⁵ When the abstract meets the real world, difficulties begin.

While the national interests of the United States originate from the fundamental beliefs of this country, their definition has always been subject to considerable debate. How one views our national interests is dictated for the most part by one's position (e.g., left, right, center) in the political spectrum. Not only is there no universal agreement with regard to the exact definition of our national interests, there is even less agreement as to their absolute or relative (i.e., conditional) value. This results in a serious dilemma when separate actions are each perceived to support individual national interests, but are themselves in conflict (e.g., support to Great Britain or Argentina in the Falklands War).

To try to simplify the problem we will group our national interests in categories using an approach proposed by Donald Nuechterlein. According to Nuechterlein, there are four categories of "intensity of interest." These are survival, vital, major, and peripheral. There is usually no disagreement over the survival interests (e.g., repelling an actual invasion or deterring nuclear war) or the very low value peripheral interests. Our real difficulty is in identifying one national interest as "vital" and another as "major."¹⁰

In spite of the difficulty involved, the vital national interests of the United States must be identified for they serve as the basic goal for our national defense strategy. Unfortunately, when we fail to adequately identify which of our national interests are vital, we have no well-defined goal and

never know if our actions are contributing to, or detracting from, our national security. Ultimately, our vital national interests are whatever the president says, and the people accept, they are. This results in a broad range of interests evidenced by the fact that "since the United States abandoned isolationism in the late 1940s, few parts of the world have escaped being declared vital by one president or another."¹⁷

In setting our vital national interests, we should note the wisdom of Frederick the Great when he advised his generals that he who tried to defend everything would end up defending nothing.¹⁸ In this light, we will attempt to keep our statement of vital national interests as simple as possible. Our foremost vital national interest is to ensure the physical survival of the United States. We must ensure that the freedom, values, and political institutions that make this nation unique are preserved. We wish to maintain and improve the standard of living of the people of the United States. As a trading nation this means that we have a vital national interest in the vitality of our economy and the prosperity of the world economy. We also recognize that access to markets and raw materials abroad is essential to the economic independence of the United States. Finally, as it ultimately contributes to these national interests and supports the high moral purpose upon which the United States was founded, we wish to "promote the establishment of democratically elected governments which endorse and comply with the principles of

human rights; national self-determination and/or autonomous development of all peoples; [and] the peaceful resolution of international disputes, based upon respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity."¹⁹

Few would argue with the concept of these as vital national interests. However, when we go beyond concept to practical application, considerable debate can be expected with regard to the existence of threats to these national interests, the appropriateness of the use of the military element of national power, and the relative value of each of these national interests. These factors will be discussed in Chapter 4, "Threats to the United States." Notwithstanding any potential disagreement with regard to the application of the elements of national power, it is to defend the vital national interests of the United States that we must design our defense strategy.

CHAPTER II

NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

This chapter will discuss what strategy is, examine the foundations for developing a national defense strategy, and review the evolution of the national defense strategy of the United States.

Definition of Strategy

Carl von Clausewitz, the 19th century Prussian military philosopher, in *On War* defined strategy as "the use of engagements for the object of the war."¹ More importantly, he tied military action to political purpose, observing that the "political object--the original motive for the war--will thus determine both the military objective to be reached and the amount of effort it requires."² Clausewitz made it very clear that an aim must be identified for the operational side of a war that is tied to the war's purpose.³ Unfortunately, in the United States there is "no tradition of intellectual concern with that border area where military problems and political ones meet."⁴

Captain Liddell Hart, the noted British strategist, contends that Clausewitz' definition of strategy intrudes on policy and narrows the use to battle only, "conveying the idea

that battle is the only means to the strategical end."⁸ Rupp in *War in the Modern World* reinforces this idea with a rough definition of strategy as "the art of bringing an enemy to battle."⁹ Hart provides a broader definition of strategy as "the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy."⁷ Thus, military strategy is the way we apply the means to achieve a desired end. This fits well with Clausewitz who observed that war is

a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means. What remains peculiar to war is simply the peculiar nature of its means. . . . The means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose.¹⁰

Hart appears to resolve his objection by providing the construct of "grand strategy" which he defines as those actions to "co-ordinate and direct all the resources of a nation, or band of nations, toward the attainment of the political object of the war--the goal defined by fundamental policy."⁹ Thus, the political goal, defined by policy, is reached through the application of the elements of national power. Strategy is the art of balancing the ways and means to achieve the ends.

Strategy in peacetime is expressed largely in choices among weapons systems. . . . The concepts of strategy [are] . . . concerned with the most efficient use of limited resources to achieve certain ends set by society.¹⁰

Jeffrey Record defines strategy as "the tailoring of means to ends and ends to means"¹¹ and

the calculated relationship of purpose and power. It involves choices within a framework of finite resources, and an ability to distinguish between the desirable and the possible, the essential and the expendable. A sound sense of priorities is the essence of sound strategy.¹²

From this discussion we can conclude that there are two significant classes of strategy failures. The first is for goals to exceed resources. The second is for strategies to fail to be flexible enough to adapt effectively to changes in the basic structure of the national and international environment.

Foundations for Developing Strategy

"Strategy depends for success, first and most, on a sound calculation and co-ordination of the end and the means."¹³ Unfortunately this has never appeared as a key element in U.S. strategic thinking.¹⁴ If we take the view that strategy "is really the art of making sound choices about the priority allocation of inevitably constrained resources"¹⁵, we can establish a basic foundation to help develop an optimum U.S. strategy for the future. "All too often what is cast as a strategy issue is in reality a budget debate over military means (or which Service may lose some money in the budget cycle) not strategic or political ends."¹⁶

It is clear that our strategy must have an identifiable goal linked to our national interests, and must operate successfully in peace and in war. We must relate our strategy to our capabilities, and allocate our limited resources based on priorities with regard to the direct relation of each threat and to its impact on U.S. interests.¹⁷ We must recognize that "military objectives . . . must be tied to political objectives as seen through the enemy's eyes, not one's own."¹⁸

Our goal is to apply these "simple" tenets and design a strategy that at its most successful, protects our national interests by compelling the enemy to "abandon his purpose," i.e., remove the threat.¹⁹

Evolution of U.S. Defense Strategy

One of the problems in our society for developing and discussing strategy is the perception by some vocal military critics that such planning is "highly volatile and likely to increase the risk of war."²⁰ Because of such criticism, we have limited our ability to train and cultivate strategists; so that today, "instead of strategists we have only bookkeepers of cost and effectiveness."²¹

This may be the first time in our history that the U.S. has needed a true national defense strategy. Before 1945 the British were the leaders on the international stage. They set our strategy and chose our enemies as they attempted to meet their national interests through maintenance of a European centered "balance of power." After World War II our powerful economy, war industries, and nuclear weapons were all the strategy we required. We faced what we perceived as a well-defined enemy, Communism and Soviet expansion, for which the simple strategy of containment could succeed, requiring only that we react to events in the world.²²

"The containment of the Soviet Union as the proper and central concern of American policy has never been much in question since the end of the Second World War."²³ In fact,

containment of the Soviet Union has been the cornerstone of our national defense strategy from the late 1940s to today. While this has been a reactive strategy, it appears to have been quite successful. The first real failure of this reactive strategy was Vietnam.

Historical Survey. Following the end of World War II, President Truman oversaw a massive demobilization of the American armed forces. Truman had tremendous confidence in his "master card"--the atomic bomb.²⁴ The "reassessment of U.S. national security policy" in 1947 gave "birth to the containment concept, with its later domino-effect corollary, by the time of the Korean War guided all national security decisions."²⁵ The Truman Doctrine in 1947 placed the United States on record as prepared to support free people anywhere in the world in the face of internal or external threats. The Korean War was the final bit of proof that "the 'Free World' was engaged in a bitter worldwide struggle with a Communist monolith controlled by Moscow."²⁶

President Eisenhower believed that the Soviets posed an economic as well as military threat to the U.S. Thus, he was determined to cut spending. He balanced his conventional arms cutbacks with a "willingness to deploy and employ nuclear weapons."²⁷ The Eisenhower years deepened the Cold War and increased American military commitments. The Eisenhower administration, while not retracting the Truman Doctrine, saw nuclear weapons and the threat of massive retaliation as a

method to meet the country's defense needs without the high cost of buildup and modernization of conventional forces.

President Kennedy faced an unstable national security environment. The U.S. military budget was geared toward nuclear arms and the Soviets seemed to have an improved strategic position.

For better or worse, though, a consensus prevailed about the problem faced. America's enemies were all Communist states. Because all Communist states were seen as part of a single bloc, those enemies could not readily be prioritized as to the significance of their threat to American interests.²⁸

Kennedy sought to have a choice other than nuclear war or backing down from an international challenge to vital national interests. His approach resulted in "a major strengthening of conventional capabilities."²⁹ The Kennedy and Johnson administrations focused on the need to be able to fight simultaneously two-and-one-half wars. This need resulted from the perception of a single world Communist movement which could threaten a coordinated attack by the Soviet Union in Europe and by China in Asia. Nuclear doctrine evolved to "assured destruction" and then "mutual assured destruction."³⁰

When President Nixon played the "China card," he reduced the requirement to be able to fight simultaneously only one-and-one-half wars. In addition, with the Nixon Doctrine, he declared that the U.S. would keep its treaty commitments and provide a nuclear umbrella if the threat was from a nuclear power. Beyond that, only military and economic assistance, not

manpower, would be provided to nations fighting internal and external enemies.³¹ By moving to a support role and disposing of one of the simultaneous wars U.S. forces must be able to fight, President Nixon began a significant reduction of general purpose forces.³²

President Carter continued the one-and-one-half wars concept and further reduced conventional forces. Adding to the problem of insufficient forces to meet previous international obligations was the inclusion by President Carter of the Persian Gulf to our vital national interests.³³

The Reagan administration began a precipitous military buildup. In addition, the Reagan Doctrine went beyond containment with a pledge to support wars of liberation to roll back Communism. However, the Reagan administration did not "relate U.S. conventional capabilities to any strategy other than the vague concept of horizontal escalation or being able to conduct a worldwide war against the Soviet Union."³⁴ Unfortunately, the actual force structure fell far short of the minimum risk forces required.

A Time of Change. As discussed in chapter 1, our national military strategy is designed to protect the physical integrity of this nation and to preserve the basic fabric that makes this nation uniquely the United States of America. Further, our strategy must protect the basic economic well being of the nation which includes the need to enhance international

conditions to provide a positive environment in keeping with the vital interests of our nation and allies.

While we have the benefit of 20/20 hindsight, we now know that the threat, while real enough, was not from one carefully controlled communist monolith. However, our national defense strategy is still almost exclusively focused on containment of the Soviet Union and built on the foundation of deterrence, forward defense, and coalition defense. Force structure and doctrine for application of military forces are built around these elements. We continue to expect our next war to be with the Soviet Union and to originate in central Europe with additional fronts in the Middle East, Korea, and Japan. Therefore, our military force structure has been designed to fight a central-European war.³⁵

Over the last 20 years U.S. military strategy has been "little more than periodic professions of military desire undisciplined either by a realistic appreciation of the finite limits of U.S. military power or by effective accommodation to fundamental changes in the global geostrategic environment."³⁶ Our overseas forces have been likened to "geological layers, each the enduring residue of some past crisis or war, now hardened into a 'commitment.'" The challenge of change is that while these deployed forces may not be yielding an adequate benefit to the U.S., their removal "might embolden enemies and dishearten allies, possibly leading to war or appeasement."³⁷

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF WAR

War has been a part of man's existence since the beginning of recorded history. The first recorded wars were the Hurrian Conquests (c. 1700 - c. 1500 B.C.) in Assyria and the Hittite Conquest of Anatolia (c. 1700 - 1325 B.C.) in Babylonia.¹ It would seem that the Greek poet Homer (c. 1000 B.C.) was right when he said, "Men grow tired of sleep, love, singing and dancing, sooner than of war."²

Why War?

Since war, commonly defined as the "state of usually open and declared armed hostile conflict between states or nations,"³ has been with mankind since the beginning of time at a brutal cost in lives and fortune, we might well ask why war exists. Cicero in 79 B.C. observed that "the aim of war is to be able to live unmolested in peace."⁴ Given more modern experiences, we find that war has been waged for much less noble causes.

International war usually arises from territorial disputes, injustice against people of one country by those of another, problems of race and prejudice, commercial and economic competition and coercion, envy of military might, or sheer cupidity for conquest.⁵

Researchers, hoping to contradict the Greek philosopher Plato's observation that "only the dead have seen the end of war,"⁶ have sought to scientifically determine the causes of war with an eye toward preventing future wars. These researchers believe that if we can ascertain the causes of war, we can "fix" or avoid them and thus avoid war. This is not a new "liberal" phenomena. Apparently the first scientific treatise on international politics, and a most accurate forecast of the nature of World War I, was Ivan S. Bloch's six-volume *The Future of War*, published in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1897-98. Bloch collected a large volume of data, applied some simple statistical analyses, and concluded economic costs and developments of military technology would render traditional war impractical and probably impossible.⁷ A more recent effort was the Correlates of War project led by David Singer. This research focused on "conditions that have been historically correlated with international war in the past, or might be expected to be so in the future."⁸

Unfortunately for all of us, the nature of cause and effect relationships in the international arena is not clear cut. "Some systemic conditions which predicted to war in one century predicted away from war in the other and vice versa."⁹ A review of recent literature on research into the initiation of war shows that no strong cause-effect relationships have yet been found.¹⁰

While there were no straight forward answers provided by these studies, there were findings which may prove valuable in designing our national defense strategy. First, we must recognize that there are no absolute ethical or political restraints to violence between nations; thus, on the international scene, violence is "not only accepted but anticipated."¹¹ However, as conflict becomes more menacing, the incentive for those affected to control it also increases.¹² Another way of looking at the effect of the changing nature of war is that the cost-benefit ratio (cost of war to benefits obtained by initiating war) increasingly opposes war.¹³ Finally, the study's findings include the conclusion that "the closer the [international] system comes to bipolarity, the greater the probability of major war."¹⁴

Evolution of Warfare

A review of the history of warfare shows evolution over time, due to political, technological, and organizational, institutional, or administrative changes.¹⁵ Technology has been changing, and will continue to change, at an exponential rate.¹⁶ "Competition in weapons is older than recorded history, but only in modern times has technological innovation been so rapid, so conscious, and so continuous. . . ."¹⁷ Due to the remarkable impact technology has had on warfare since the Iron Age, yielding dramatic changes in the lethality, destructiveness, and totality of war, this section will focus on the technological evolution of warfare.

We view some aspects of warfare as modern, yet their true origin exists in antiquity. For example, chemical warfare existed with the Greeks. "Greek fire" was the napalm of its day with use recorded as early as 673 B.C. when Constantinople was besieged by the Saracens. Likewise, gas warfare in the form of sulfur fumes was also a Greek invention employed at the siege of Delium in 424 B.C.¹⁹ While we view change as very rapid in our time, the equipment of war changed very slowly in the period from antiquity to the Middle Ages, and those changes that did occur usually were not due to what we now call science.²⁰ In the 1400s and 1500s this was due in part to the satisfaction the soldiers had with their weapons, their fear of innovation, and the reluctance of the rulers to increase their military expenditures. There is a note of irony that even then the rulers "were generally appalled at the cost of new weapons."²⁰

It is not always the big, breakthrough invention that results in a change in the nature of warfare. Sometimes a little innovation provides a significant shift of military power. For example, the stirrup, invented by the Chinese in A.D. 600, increased the military efficiency of the Mongolian nomads. The adoption of the stirrup in Europe gave the armored knights their strength in battle, the ability to take the shock of contact without being unhorsed. Such a small thing, the stirrup, but it steered the course of warfare for hundreds of years. Even after the demise of the knight, the cavalry

reigned supreme on the field of battle until the appearance of the Swiss halberdier.²¹

The beginning of the modern period of war might be marked by the increased use of gunpowder.²² At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the industrial and agrarian revolutions, an enlarging population for available manpower, and improved communications pointed to an intensification of warfare and to a greater impact on society.²³ The wars of the mid-nineteenth century (1854-1871) "were the first to be fought with the new weapons and techniques of the Industrial Revolution."²⁴ The most important of the inventions applied in this period were not what we would view as military inventions--the railway and the telegraph. The modern bullet (the Minie ball, which was neither invented by C. E. Minie nor a ball), percussion cap and breech loading small arms, and breech loading artillery gave new power to the tactical defense. The long-range accurate fire of the rifle further strengthened the defense and put an end to the boot-to-boot cavalry charge.²⁵

The American Civil War was the first major war to be fought in this era, and in the end, the Union victory said as much for their industrial and financial strength as for their battlefield acumen.²⁶ Both the American Civil War and the Boer War in South Africa exposed the enhanced importance of firepower and showed the necessity of the soldier to "seek shelter in trenches from the devastating power of rifled weapons."²⁷ The stage was set for World War I.

World War I was the first major technological war in history. The war began with cavalry patrols armed with rifles and lances, but "within four years the character of war had utterly changed."²⁸ The technology of World War I was "immeasurably more complicated" than previous wars. The great innovations included the airplane, the tank, poison gas, and the submarine.²⁹ However, the integration of technology with the warfighting tactics and doctrine of the era was not always smooth. As an example of the failure to adapt to changes in technology, the machine gun, the *mitrailleuse*, first developed between 1851 and 1869, was seen by the French as an artillery piece until its deadliness was finally proven on the killing fields of World War I.³⁰ At the other end of the gun barrel, it should have been apparent that cavalry had no role in the face of machine-gun fire, but "Allied officers continue[d] to depend on it. Field Marshal Douglas Haig, the British commander-in-chief, had after all been a cavalry officer, and he continued to believe in it to the end."³¹ In another example, the tank was first used in a serious fashion at the Battle of Cambrai (November 20, 1917), but, "thanks to lack of faith in the new weapon [by the British], there were not sufficient reserves on hand to exploit the victory."³² More ready application of technology of the era would "undoubtedly have prevented the four years of immobile trench warfare of World War I."³³ Technology had provided a strength to the defense without the offense developing suitable counter-tactics. The result was a

stalemate which soaked the ground with the blood of a generation.³⁴

World War II was a period for perfection of World War I weapons--guns, airplanes, tanks, torpedoes, mines, submarines, and surface ships. Significant scientific developments included the proximity fuse, radar, electronic fire control equipment, anti-submarine devices, incendiaries, rockets, and, of course, the atomic bomb.³⁵

The end of World War II began the age of "nuclear warfare"--an age marked by the absence of nuclear war. Wars have remained conventional and to a degree, limited. "Under the nuclear shadow, wars like the First and Second World Wars, in which groups of the major industrial nations struggled against each other until one side was exhausted, seem inconceivable."³⁶ In the place of major world-wide war, there has been an increase in low-level conflict over the last 20 years.³⁷ Since World War II the world has seen the Korean War; the Arab-Israeli Wars; India's Wars with Pakistan and China; British Wars in Northern Ireland, in the Franco-British Suez expedition, in Borneo with Malaysia against Indonesia, and with Argentina over the Falkland Islands; and the Iran-Iraq War.³⁸ In addition, we have had the U.S. in Vietnam, the Soviets in Afghanistan, U.S. military action in Granada and Panama, and the destruction of Lebanon from within and without. Perhaps some of these do not meet the definition of "war" and others might be added, but suffice it to say the "predictions made in

the 1970s that conventional warfare was becoming obsolete have not been borne out."³⁹

Classes of Modern Wars

As Clausewitz observed "wars must vary with the nature of their motives and of the situations which give rise to them."⁴⁰ Preston and Wise in *Men in Arms: A History of Warfare and Its Interrelationships with Western Society* give a broader definition of war than previously used.

Warfare may be defined as any conflict between rival groups, by force of arms or other means, which has claims to be recognized as a legal conflict. Under this definition there may be a state of war without actual violence or clash of arms.⁴¹

Modern warfare falls into three broad classes, based in part on the level of intensity of the conflict. The first major class of modern warfare is Nuclear War. This class of warfare can be subdivided into Strategic and Theater/Tactical Nuclear War. The second major class of modern warfare is Conventional War. This class can be subdivided into Major Conflict/Unlimited War and Low-level/Limited Objective Conflict. The final major class of modern warfare is the Unconventional War subdivided into Non-military and Terrorist Actions. These classes of war have been significantly affected by the evolution of technology and the world political environment.

Future of Warfare

Given why war exists, how war has changed through the evolution of technology, and how the political environment has

changed, what do we see as the future of warfare? "He who intends to build a good instrument of war first must ask himself what the next war will be like."⁴²

Over the 150 years of the Correlates of War study period (1816 - 1965) the number of wars has been about constant with an average of one war beginning every 18 months. Over the same period the number of recognized nations has grown from 23 (1816) to 124 (1965).⁴³ This study concluded that there has been "much less large-scale international war in the world than chance alone would lead us to expect."⁴⁴ While they could identify no recognizable cycles over time, they did identify an increase in deadliness (in absolute and relative terms), a decrease in frequency (when controlled for number of countries and interaction opportunities), and an increase in variability.⁴⁵

Future of Nuclear War. Many people thought that nuclear weapons would result in the end of war, but "war has not been excluded [by nuclear weapons], it has merely become more dangerous."⁴⁶ The invasion of South Korea by North Korea was proof that the bomb had not "made land warfare obsolete" or "conferred immunity from attack or exceptional power" on those in possession of this weapon.⁴⁷ That, of course, does not stop nations from seeking to join the nuclear club. "Countries such as India, Pakistan and Israel, already termed *de facto* nuclear states, will be joined by other threshold powers such as Argentina, South Africa and Brazil."⁴⁸

From the military perspective, nuclear war is unlikely for the cost of "victory" would be much too high. "No longer are victory's spoils acceptable, for in a nuclear war, massive retaliation would be the inheritance of the winner."⁴⁹ The only proper use for nuclear weapons appears to be to deter the use of nuclear weapons by the enemy.⁵⁰ Given the continued spread of nuclear weapons technology, total nuclear disarmament would not appear possible.⁵¹

Future of Conventional War. Given that nuclear weapons exist for deterrence, not warfighting, there has been a continual drive to improve conventional weapons since World War II.⁵² The most significant recent developments have been in the areas of precision guidance; remote guidance and control; improved munitions; target identification and acquisition; command, control, and communications; and electronic warfare.⁵³

"Theoretically, the technologies will favour defence over attack."⁵⁴ The future will continue to bring tremendous growth in high-technology weapons, changing the nature of warfare. "As the speed of such [technological] developments increases, strategies will require more flexibility to ensure encompassing all factors."⁵⁵ Weapon accuracy will improve greatly giving "the ability to target significantly enhanced-explosive munitions at very long ranges with pinpoint precision."⁵⁶ Additional military technologies which may change the nature of war include orbital systems, directed energy, intelligent machines, new energy sources, and new materials.⁵⁷

"New weapons introduced in tandem with a fundamental organizational change can lead to an historical cross-over in the age-old cycle between offence and defence." Examples of this from the past include the stirrup which gave cavalry superior capabilities over infantry, the hook on the end of the spear and the English longbow which brought an end to the iron knight, the machine gun and artillery shell which stopped movement in World War I, and the tank and tactical air power which restored mobility and gave the advantage back to the offense.⁸⁸

Almost 40 years ago, Col Norman Morris, in an unpublished thesis for the Air War College, concluded that

technological progress and national survival have merged. Nations have reached the era where technical progress is the determining factor in event of war. Superior technology means victory, inferior technology means defeat.⁸⁹

However, as we know the Vietnam War was not won by the technologically superior force. Perhaps technology is not the answer in all forms of warfare.

Warfare has "de-evolved" to a position previously held in the 17th Century. From around 1500 to just before the French Revolution wars were limited, "fought with limited means for limited objectives."⁹⁰ The period after 1789 to after World War II was a period of large scale wars. Again, we have returned to a period where "a long global war fought by mobilization of 10 or more million men, which was universally envisaged in 1945-1950, no longer seems plausible."⁹¹ Other

reasons that "total" wars seem inconceivable include cost, rate of expenditure of modern weapons versus their potential replacement rate, pressure from other powers, and pressure from the international community.⁶² Additional constraints are the increasing destructiveness of modern weaponry, requirement for military personnel with advanced training, complex roles played by the superpowers, and limitations imposed by world and domestic public opinion.⁶³ "Many regimes will find it increasingly difficult to mobilize support for traditional foreign policies."⁶⁴

Other factors significantly raise the potential costs of war. The inexpensive ease of production of biological and chemical weapons and their availability to increasing numbers of states and nonstate actors "will have potentially profound implications for security within highly volatile regions such as the Middle East or perhaps southern Africa and South Asia, and even our own hemisphere."⁶⁵ In addition, the continued "diffusion" of advanced high-tech weapons, including "proliferation of delivery systems," raises the stakes in future conflict.⁶⁶

There are some who suggest that this view of the increasing deadliness of the weapons of war is nothing new. In fact "there have been many new weapons which looked excessively deadly in their time. . . ."⁶⁷ A good example is the crossbow which was banned by Pope Innocent II in 1139, because of its lethal impact on the armored knight, the nobility. This ban

was modified to allow Christians to use the crossbow against Mohammedans, and soon Christian armies were using it against each other.⁶⁸

No matter what view we take of individual weapons, wars themselves continue to become more deadly.

The deadliest war between 1816 and 1850 was the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-1829, which killed 166 persons in battle for every 100,000 of the population of the belligerent countries. The deadliest wars of the period since 1910, World Wars I and II, killed about 1,400 and 1,100, respectively, per 100,000 of the population of the belligerents.⁶⁹

The increased lethality and enormous cost of modern weapons have served to dampen the intensity of war, resulting in "a decline in the number of battles that end in the destruction of the enemy army and decisive victory." Examples include Korea, Vietnam, 1973 Arab-Israeli War, Afghanistan, and the Iran-Iraq War. War has become too costly and risky to pursue to the ultimate destruction of the enemy army. The basis for using military force may be lost if a nation cannot use this force to achieve its political objectives at an acceptable cost.⁷⁰

We conclude that the nature of war has been changed forever, and as a result the use of war to achieve political objectives will become increasingly less valuable to developed nations. Within the developed world, we expect to see "greater reliance on indirect forms of warfare and the employment of proxies."⁷¹ Within the Third World, the employment of military force will remain a more likely course of action as the

potential for success using the other instruments of national power is very limited.

Given the budget realities of today and the evolution of warfare, we must structure our strategy (how we will employ our resources) to ensure our national survival and maximize the chances of satisfying our national interests while minimizing the risks and costs. It is essential that we choose a wise strategy for employing our limited resources as we daily see that "peace itself is war in masquerade."²²

CHAPTER IV

THREATS TO THE UNITED STATES

The ancient Chinese military sage Sun Tzu gave critical advice with regard to developing military strategy. "Therefore I say: 'Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril.'"¹ To help us know ourselves we reviewed our national interests in chapter 1 and examined the evolution of our national security strategy in chapter 2. In this chapter we will focus on knowing the enemy. What threats do we need to defend against?

The world is much different today than the world of the late 1940s and 1950s when the strategy of containment was adopted. We must now consider what the world will look like 10 years from now if we are to prepare to meet the challenges of the future. The future for the purpose of this study was set at 10 years for this is "the period which decision makers and force developers must think about in order to procure weapons and forces to match future threats."² What countries will be competing with the United States in the international arena? Where will the challenges to our national interests originate? How do East-West issues play into the future? What about North-South issues? How do the changes in the Soviet Union and

Eastern Europe affect the security equation? These are all questions that we should consider if we are to develop a viable defense strategy.

There are currently 170 independent, sovereign nations buying and selling goods, and consuming and competing for increasingly scarce natural resources. At any time the national interests of one nation may conflict with national interests of another. The larger the nation the more interactions take place in the international arena and the greater the risk of conflicting national interests. We can never afford total security, even if that were possible. Instead, "the best we can hope to do is lessen our insecurity."³ The two factors which will play the greatest role in the international security environment in the future will be "conflict . . . stemming from political differences and the technologies that will be available to various states and other actors."⁴ In chapter 3 we looked at the technology of war, and in this chapter we will look at the actors and the potential political differences.

To discuss threats to the U.S. we must first face the age-old question raised by Bernard Brodie (as well as, I am sure, many others in one form or another) "should we adjust our military posture to the opponent's intentions or to his capabilities?"⁵ If we were to perceive threats based only on intentions, then a number of nations who wish the U.S. ill would be viewed as threats. If we were to perceive threats

based only on capabilities, then we would be compelled to view a nation like Great Britain as a threat. Indeed, threat-perception must be two dimensional with consideration given to both our estimate of a nation's capability and our estimate of their intent. We must look at threats to the United States in the form of an equation:

Threat-Perception = Estimated Capability X Estimated Intent.⁶

We must also recognize that there will always be great uncertainty as we attempt to interpret the information available on the capability and intent of the nations of the world. Our goal must be to make a balanced assessment, maintaining our level of risk at an acceptable level.

There are some who believe "the conditions of U.S. security have not changed: Western Europe, Northeast Asia, the Persian Gulf, and the Caribbean still fall within the U.S. defense perimeter. The United States itself remains potentially vulnerable to attack."⁷ While these facts are true, the world nevertheless has fundamentally changed.

Indeed, the very structure of war, as discussed in chapter 3, has undergone remarkable change. Likewise, changes in the international environment present us with challenges unlike those of 40 years ago. The threats to U.S. interests are no longer as "simple" as the "monolithic Communist conspiracy." In the uncertain future of a multipolar world, we cannot afford to focus exclusively on the "Soviet threat." If we are to protect our national interests we must have a clear

understanding of the threats that face us. In today's environment of tight budgets, "the public's support is contingent upon its perception of a genuine threat to the nation's way of life and political independence." Where do those threats originate?

Regions of the World

To simplify our examination of future threats to the national interests of the United States, we will examine the world in six rather large regions--the Soviet Union, Europe, Asia, Southwest Asia and the Middle East, the Americas, and the remaining nations of the Third World.

The Soviet Union. For 40 years the Soviet Union has been the primary focus for the national defense strategy of the United States. In every world event that appeared to conflict with U.S. national interests, there has been the underlying assumption of involvement by the Soviet Union. Seemingly every national policy decision was measured against its effect on the balance in the world between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. In a world that is rapidly shifting from bipolar to multipolar, how should we view the current threat of the Soviet Union?

At the level of national survival, any discussion of threats to the United States must begin with a discussion of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is the only nation that can threaten the national survival of the United States. Other nations have the capability to significantly damage the U.S. militarily, but only the Soviet Union can destroy the United

States. As we look at the Threat-Perception equation we know the Soviet Union has the capability; thus the question must focus on intent.

In 1965 in a thesis for the Air War College, Theodore Severn quoted Lenin on capitalism and socialism: "In the end, one or the other will triumph." Indeed, it appears that between Soviet-style communism and capitalism, if recent changes in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe are any indication, the "battle," if not the war, has been won by capitalism. However, this does not end the threat to the U.S. from the Soviet Union.

We must ever be mindful that the Soviet Union has a very significant military capability. However, we must also keep in mind that the military is only one element of national power. Currently, the military element of national power is the only factor that gives the Soviet Union "super power" status. Mikhail Gorbachev has begun the process of change which may be the only hope for the Soviet Union to survive economically, much less obtain some semblance of economic power and retain the military power it currently possesses. Without major changes, the Soviet Union would likely slide farther and farther into the position of a third-world country, albeit one with nuclear weapons.

Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika* will succeed or fail. If they succeed, "the Soviet Union will remain a principal competitor to the United States for global

influence." If they fail, they will "undoubtedly lead to a successor Soviet leadership determined to retain its grip on power by the possession of major military programs and to enhance its legitimacy by successful foreign policy initiatives."¹⁰ Thus, either way it goes for Gorbachev, the Soviet Union will likely be some form of threat to U.S. interests. So, what type of threat?

As we watch the internal difficulties the Soviet Union faces with regard to their economy, their social infrastructure, and their ethnic problems, the words of Catherine of Russia come to mind. "The only way to save our empires from the encroachment of the people is to engage in war, and thus substitute national passions for social aspirations."¹¹ This is not unique to Russian history. There are numerous examples of diverting "the masses from domestic constitutional problems" with external threats and wars. France practiced this approach in the Crimean and Italian campaigns, and Prussia did the same with wars with Denmark, Austria, and France.¹² However, this is not likely to occur in the Soviet Union of today due to the nature of the ethnic and nationalistic problems facing the leadership in Moscow. The leaders of the Soviet Union (i.e., the Russian leaders in Moscow) are very likely concerned that "external threats and wars" would give the Soviet republics an excellent opportunity to split with Moscow, rather than to pull together against an external foe.

We must also consider the concern that the Soviet Union might feel pressured into a "preventive" war. The "preventive motivation" decision for war occurs when one believes that one's military power and potential are falling with respect to a rising adversary, and one fears the result of that decline. However, the preventive motivation is just one variable considered in the decisions for war. "It is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for war, but contributes to war in combination with other variables and other causal sequences."¹³ Given the risks that exist with regard to war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, this would not be a likely step for the Soviets who are viewed by most analysts as "conservative and risk-averse." With the addition of the political changes taking place within Moscow and in Eastern Europe, and the internal pressures emanating from some of the republics of the Soviet Union, it is difficult to postulate any conditions that would prompt a direct Soviet attack anywhere.¹⁴

"Soviet political doctrine is undeniably defensive, speaking of war only in the context of an 'imperialist' attack, but its military strategy is undeniably offensive."¹⁵ According to Soviet doctrine, a major war between the capitalist and communist worlds would have to be started by the capitalists. An aggressive war would foolishly risk everything with no reasonable chance of success.¹⁶ It has only been recently that the political leadership of the Soviet Union has acknowledged the effect that their force structure in Eastern Europe has had

on relations with the West. Although it will take some time, bilateral agreements, unilateral decisions, and requests by Eastern European nations to withdraw Soviet forces will result in a less threatening European environment.

However, even before the massive political changes we have observed in Eastern Europe, the credibility of a threat to Western Europe from the Soviet Union had reached a questionable level. Given the military, economic, and political realities, "it is difficult to imagine what Soviet leaders would stand to gain by launching an all-out attack on Western Europe."¹⁷ Three possible reasons for a Soviet attack in Europe are pure conquest (given an expectation of victory and confidence in no nuclear exchange), desperation borne out of a general revolt in Eastern Europe spreading into the non-Russian borderlands of the Soviet Union, or to preempt an attack aimed at the Soviet Union.¹⁸ The first and last of these can be rejected out of hand. The Soviets could have no expectation of victory and no real confidence that tactical nuclear weapons might not be used. The second is not likely, given the free hand the Soviets have allowed the Eastern European nations. Finally, the Soviets are not likely to initiate hostilities in Europe "that would entail unacceptable military risks, be economically disastrous and undo all their efforts to change their image in the West."¹⁹ In the final analysis, it is "not clear that the Soviets think of Western Europe as a prize worth taking risks for."²⁰

From this discussion of the threat from the Soviet Union and the previous discussion in chapter 3 on the changing nature of war, it would appear that the Soviet nuclear arsenal remains a threat that we must deter, even if its use (i.e., nuclear war) is not likely. It would also appear that the threat from the Soviet Union is not one of large scale conventional war. At the same time there is every reason to believe that we will remain in direct competition with the Soviet Union in various areas around the world. Two factors with regard to this competition must be considered. First, there is no reason to believe that we have a national interest at every location that falls within the national interests of the Soviet Union. This competition does not automatically have to be a "zero-sum game." Second, within the evolving world political environment, there is strong reason to believe that on some issues (e.g., environmental and "North-South" issues) the U.S. and the Soviet Union could find themselves on the same side. Thus, while we conclude the Soviet Union will remain a potential threat to our national interests, we believe this threat will be played out in an arena much changed from the past and will involve more than just the military element of national power.

Europe. Western Europe is of "indisputably direct, vital strategic importance to the United States"²¹, and, thus has been the principal focus of containment since the Truman Doctrine in 1947. This focus has driven "the size and

structure of US ground, tactical air, and other general purpose forces."²² With what can only be called the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact, the external threat to Western Europe from the East appears to have been removed as discussed in the section on the threat from the Soviet Union. However, in spite of these very positive changes, there are still threats to U.S. interests in Europe.

The first threat to U.S. interests in Europe is a direct result from the breakdown of the Warsaw Pact. For 40 years, the Warsaw Pact and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) faced each other across the "Iron Curtain." For 40 years, with the exception of the invasion of Hungary by the Soviet Union in 1956 and the Cyprus-Turkey War in 1974, there has been no war in Europe. This does not seem exceptional until one examines European history and notes that 23 wars were waged in Europe in the period of 1815 - 1945.²³ These wars have been a mix of wars of "conquest," "regime," and "legitimacy."²⁴ Many of the boundary disputes, ethnic conflicts, and other old animosities have been held in check for the last 40 years by the image of a common enemy (i.e., NATO) and the structure of a common defense organization (i.e., the Warsaw Pact). With the breakdown of the Warsaw Pact and the absence of a common enemy, the potential certainly exists for such issues to resurface, resulting in armed conflict. We may have already seen the first indications of such a resurfacing with reports of ethnic clashes in areas of Eastern

Europe and the Soviet Union. While such clashes do not directly threaten the U.S., they can threaten U.S. interests by initially involving one or more of the NATO countries or by dragging NATO allies into an on-going conflict.

The second threat to U.S. interests in Europe is the economic threat posed by a unified Europe. The potential economic power of a re-unified Germany coupled with the European Community (EC) in the era of EC 92 could present a significant challenge to the United States. However, this should be a healthy economic challenge with much positive potential. While not a military threat to the United States, the outcome may be just as significant. How the U.S. meets such an economic challenge will help re-establish the foundation for a vibrant, growing U.S. economy or set the stage for a downward spiral into a second-rate economy with a deteriorating standard of living.

Asia. Even more than in Europe, at issue in Asia is the difficulty in identifying the locus of threats to U.S. vital interests. While the Soviet Union remains an active player in the region, their primary activities appear to be focused in the diplomatic and economic areas. The potential for economic ties between the Soviet Union and South Korea and the growth of economic ties between Japan and the Soviet Union are strong evidence of a shift of priorities by the Soviet Union. However, as discussed in the section on the Soviet Union, the

success of the Soviet Union in developing economic ties should not, in and of itself, be seen as a threat to U.S. interests.

There are a number of areas in the Asian region where insurgencies are active, e.g., the Philippines and Cambodia. Likewise, there are border disputes existent between a significant number of countries in the region, e.g., Japan and the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union and China, China and Vietnam, and North and South Korea. In each of these areas there is a varying degree of potential for military conflict. However, the greatest potential for a renewed outbreak of hostilities exists on the Korean Peninsula. While anything is possible given the leadership of North Korea, recent unification talk leads one to believe that hostilities are not likely. However, much more must change before the perceived threat is reduced in Korea. Another source of military conflict with a historical basis would be a renewal of conflict between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and one of the region's democracies. However, this is probably unlikely given that the PRC has turned inward in an attempt to solve significant internal problems.

Of all the nations in Asia, Japan is of "indisputably direct, vital strategic importance to the United States."²⁸ However, there do not currently appear to be any direct military threats to Japan. In fact, given the strength of the Japanese economy it is hard to visualize who might benefit by a military threat to Japan. Conversely, it appears that a number

of nations in the Asian region are quite uncomfortable with the thought of Japan, the "economic superpower," building up her military force structure.

The greatest threat in Asia to U.S. national interests would appear economic. This region is the center of tremendous economic potential. Japan is an economic superpower, and South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong have very strong growth-oriented economies. The U.S. finds itself on the wrong side of a sizable trade imbalance and competitively at a disadvantage with these nations. Like our response to the economic challenge of Europe, how the U.S. responds to this economic challenge will significantly impact the future of our economy.

Southwest Asia and the Middle East. Oil and ethnic/religious conflicts will continue to be the focus of future problems in this region.

"Oil from the Persian Gulf is a small fraction of total US oil requirements; however, loss of this oil would cause European economies to collapse with this having significantly disruptive effects on the US economy. Thus, this area is indirectly vital to the United States."²⁶

While oil is not likely to be the primary target in future conflicts in this region, the flow of oil will certainly be affected. While the old concept of a Soviet attack on Iran in a move against Persian Gulf oil or a warm-water port is quite unlikely after the Soviet experience in Afghanistan, other conflicts could disrupt the flow of oil. The most likely is a renewed conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

Likewise, the actions of Libya and Iran may present a threat to oil access.

Perhaps a greater threat to U.S. interests worldwide is the export of radical, fundamentalist religion by countries such as Iran. The spread of their brand of Moslem fundamentalism puts the stability of nations in this region and the rest of the Third World at risk. This destabilization may eventually spread to developed nations with a large population of Moslems, such as France. This religious fanaticism and willingness to use any tool (e.g., terrorism) to strike at those seen to oppose them gives those individuals who exert leadership on these religious groups a significant degree of power. The danger to world order grows exponentially given the potential for spread of chemical and nuclear weapons, as discussed in chapter 3.

Another potential conflict in this region with very threatening overtones would be conflict between two nuclear-armed Third World countries (e.g., India and Pakistan). Even though the war would not likely spread outside these two countries, it could prove to be an international disaster.

The Americas. Our primary interest in this region is stability and viable economies to provide trading partners. However, the debt burden, hyper-inflation, and extremes of rich and poor in most of these countries does not bode well for stability or trade. Drug traffic presents an additional complication. The U.S. market for illegal drugs has produced a production and

distribution infrastructure with enough resources that they may threaten the survival of more than one government.

Close to home we have a great interest in the stability of our two closest neighbors, Mexico and Canada. Civil unrest in Mexico would have dramatic repercussions in the United States. The further growth of illegal immigration would have long-term impact on the U.S. population. In addition, violence would likely spread across the border.²⁷ To the north the secession movement in Canada's Quebec Province has the potential for significant violence which could easily spill over into the U.S. In both of these cases, the blessing of unguarded borders might soon turn into a curse.

The Rest of the Third World. "Few conceivable political or military events in the Third World would, in themselves, entail relatively immediate and profoundly adverse consequences for US security."²⁸ As a manufacturing and trading nation, our national interests in the Third World focus on "preservation of access to those fossil fuel, mineral, and metal deposits . . . indispensable to the West's economic well being."²⁹ Thus, Third World conflicts, whether internal or external, are of significance to U.S. security when the conflicts "threaten disruption of continued Western access to critical resources."³⁰ In a similar fashion, as a trading nation, the U.S. is interested in a stable world with a growing economy.

Threat Analysis

In the past we saw much clearer what we believed the future would bring as each threat was almost exclusively defined by the conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States. With the "removal" of the Soviet threat, it is apparent after examining these regions of the world that we face an uncertain future with regard to threats to U.S. vital interests.

As we look to the future we can see major trends. These include the continuing evolution of the Soviet Union and its relative military and economic power, a continued spread of conventional arms including high-technology weapons, and nuclear proliferation into less stable nations.³¹ In addition, we can see a greater need for regional stability, arms reductions, crisis management, support for nation building, and economic interaction.

A common thread through each of the regions we examined is the shift in focus of the threat away from the application of military force. In effect, the relative value of the military instrument of national power has fallen with respect to the economic and political instruments. This agrees with our conclusion in chapter 3 that the use of war (i.e., the military instrument of national power) to achieve political objectives is becoming less and less valuable to developed nations.

"Unlike 20th century threats to U.S. political interests which were predominantly military in character, those of the early decades of the 21st century are likely to be more economic in character. To meet these threats the United States will have to replace its reliance on strategies of military force with a reliance on strategies of economic influence."³²

In the next chapter we will address a national defense strategy to counter these threats to our national interests.

CHAPTER V

A PROPOSAL FOR ACTION

Only if we remain a strong nation will we be able to, in the words of the American patriot Alexander Hamilton, "choose peace or war as our interest guided by justice shall dictate."¹ This phrase, adopted by George Washington and made famous in his *Farewell Address*, should guide us even today. A strong nation guided by justice can choose where and when to employ the military element of its national power. We have inherited from the Washingtons and Hamiltons who have gone before us the obligation to keep this nation strong and continue to guide it with justice.

In this paper we have examined our national interests, the evolution of our national defense strategy, the changing nature of warfare, and the threats facing the United States in an uncertain future. In this chapter we will synthesize these data and recommend a national defense strategy. This chapter will be divided into four major sections. First, we will examine our priority interests. Second, we will discuss employment strategy and military force structure. Then, we will discuss the other elements of national power that must be

brought to bear in this national defense strategy. Finally, we will conclude with a summary and call for action.

Priority Interests

Changing threats and budget shortfalls dictate that the defense budget will be reduced dramatically. Members of the defense reform movement point out the obvious--you can only cut defense costs "by cutting *force structure* and eliminating the missions of these deleted forces."² Thus, we must plan to face the future with a force structure unlike what we have today. To do otherwise is to accept a "hollow" military and fail the "means to ends" test of strategy. Fortunately, the changing world environment gives us a unique opportunity to adjust both the "means" and the "ends."

The goal of our strategy is to protect our vital interests while preserving a stable, acceptable balance of power in the nuclear and conventional arenas. From the earlier chapters of this work we developed the framework upon which to build our defense strategy, and our force structure must be configured accordingly. At this point we should examine each element of this framework and determine what each means with regard to force structure.

Nuclear War. We have concluded that nuclear war is highly unlikely, but nuclear weapons play an essential, deterrent role. Thus, we must ensure that we maintain a well-equipped, modern retaliatory force as a deterrent.

The greatest risk for nuclear war results from the spread of nuclear weapons technology to less stable regimes. As these nations acquire nuclear weapons the risk increases that a regional conflict could result in a nuclear war. It would appear that many of those who have acquired or are trying to acquire nuclear technology are doing so to provide their nation a so-called "weapon of last resort." Quite frankly this term applies to all the current nuclear forces in being today. We must recognize that we can only make it difficult for these nations to acquire nuclear technology--we cannot stop it.

All the restrictions, all the international agreements made during peacetime are fated to be swept away like dried leaves on the winds of war. A man who is fighting a life-and-death fight--as all wars are nowadays--has the right to use any means to keep his life.²

However, we must keep at the top of our priority list deterrence of nuclear war, support for nuclear non-proliferation, and verifiable arms control treaties.

Conventional War and the Soviet Threat. The U.S. can be reasonably confident that another major, conventional war will not occur. The most likely source of such a war, since the end of World War II, has been the Soviet Union. However, from chapter 4 we concluded that direct military conflict with the Soviet Union is unlikely in Europe or elsewhere. Therefore, we do not need to maintain the European-war oriented force structure. In fact, only a token U.S. force is needed on the ground in Western Europe, and tactical air forces in Europe can be reduced significantly as well.

The Third World. The Roman, Julius Caesar, said: "It was no less worthy of a general to conquer by the wisdom of his decisions than by the force of his arms."⁴ It is within the Third World that our successes will hinge more on our decision-making ability than on our war-fighting skills. While Western Europe, Japan, and the Persian Gulf remain high on our defense interest list, direct military action will be more likely required in the Third World. "The conflicts most likely to occur in the Third World areas are of the low-intensity variety."⁵ This will present some serious challenges.

First, the American military is accused of preparing for their "preferred mode of conflict--war on the Central Front in Europe--consigning other and more likely applications of military power to the realm of exotic diversions."⁶ This must change.

Second, it is essential that we very carefully choose where and when we employ military force. It is doubtful that U.S. military forces will ever have the ability to resolve a genuine revolutionary upheaval or civil war in the Third World. Thus, the nation will be better served if we do not get involved at all.

Third, there are operational barriers to the employment of U.S. forces in much of the Third World. These include the distance to the area of interest, the lack of politically secure military access in some parts of the world for staging, the structure of current general purpose forces dedicated to

defend Europe, and the Vietnam syndrome (i.e., the difficulty of obtaining and keeping public and congressional support).

Employment Strategy and Military Force Structure

For 40 years we have followed the strategy of containment and focused our energies almost exclusively on the Soviet Union. There are those who cheer that the Cold War is over and we can disarm. However, we should remember the advice of Publilius Syrus who advised ancient Rome that "he is best secure from dangers who is on his guard even when he seems safe." We were highly successful in our containment strategy, but now have lost our "enemy." It does not appear that the most productive approach for the uncertain future is to blindly continue with the containment strategy. In this multipolar world we cannot afford to prepare for only one enemy and employ only one instrument of national power (i.e., the military). Instead, our focus must shift from "containment" to a new strategy. We cannot afford to merely produce a copy of the strategy from the past. If the United States is to retain its place of leadership in the world, we must be bold and creative. We must be willing to take some risks without being reckless.

Within our strategy we seek to balance the means at our disposal and the ends desired. However, none of the changes proposed to our force structure should be made in haste. In fact, the force structure should be modified in a methodical fashion over the next 10 years, using these proposed changes as "bargaining chips" in international arms reduction talks.

Finally, our goal is not to produce a strategy geared to fight World War III. Instead, we seek to produce a strategy that will ensure that we never have to do so. "The true strength of a prince does not consist so much in his ability to conquest his neighbors, as in the difficulty they find in attacking him."

Nuclear War. We have concluded that nuclear war is unlikely, but a viable deterrent force must be maintained. Thus, our forces should be retained in the strategic triad, but with some refinements. The manned penetrating bomber (e.g., the B-2) is rapidly becoming too expensive to procure in the numbers needed. We should revise our employment tactics to allow use of less-costly non-penetrating manned bombers with stand-off munitions. A less costly bomber could be procured in the numbers warranted for both the nuclear and conventional missions. The nuclear submarine program should be continued to ensure the virtual invulnerability of this leg of the triad. However, as we negotiate reduced numbers of strategic warheads, we should take our reductions in the ground-based nuclear missiles in order to reduce the number of targets in the heartland of the country open to a pre-emptive strike.

Non-nuclear War. This strategy employs a stairstep approach. On the first step we rely on nation-building (i.e., the full range of available programs from the civil and private sector) and military assistance programs. In almost all cases American

interests will be better served by employing instruments of national power other than the military.

We move up to the second step (initial use of military power) only when vital interests are at risk, actions at the non-military step did not solve the problem, and the use of military force can actually be expected to achieve the desired end result. In most cases this initial use of military force will rely on the active duty special operations forces supported by the full range of tactical air support.

We move up to the third step (sustained action) if additional forces are required. This step involves the active duty contingency support forces--tailored to the mission, highly mobile, light-armored, with heavy fire-power, and the force projection capability of the Navy-Marine combined arms team. Under certain conditions, operations may move directly from step one to step three.

We move up to the fourth step (heavy involvement) if additional forces are required. This step involves the call-up and employment of the reserve forces. This strategy is intended to ensure that any large-scale commitment of military forces has the support of the Congress and the public.

Force Structure. In the future we cannot expect to maintain the same level of forward basing as we currently enjoy. The reduction in the perceived threat and the increase in nationalistic feelings work against U.S. bases in many foreign countries. The harder we try to retain base rights in regions

where the people are growing opposed to our large military presence, the more we will damage our long-term national interests. In particular, by the end of 10 years we should expect to have withdrawn all but a token ground force from Europe. Tactical air force resources should no longer be assigned as permanent units in Europe, but unit rotation should place a token force in Europe at all times. Given the political situation in the Philippines, we should cease negotiating for the renewal of the Philippine bases and announce an orderly phased withdrawal and reallocation of these missions throughout the Pacific. In Korea, we should announce a phased withdrawal of U.S. ground forces tied to the strength of South Korean forces and continued "quiet" in the region. Tactical air force assets should be phased out over a somewhat longer period than the ground forces. We should make a token reduction of forces from Japan.

The recommended Army force structure of conventional active (70% light and 30% heavy) and reserve (70% heavy and 30% light) forces in the United States must be configured to be available for rapid deployment for contingencies anywhere in the world. The Epstein study, *Strategy and Force Planning: The Case of the Persian Gulf*, concludes that a credible deterrent in the Persian Gulf region would be a 5 division Rapid Deployment Force assuming "it deploys in time." If we use this as a notional base case for military intervention in the Third World, our emphasis must be on increasing the speed at which we

can enter the area of interest and close on the enemy. Therefore, this strategy requires significant resources be applied to improve our strategic airlift and fast sealift.

We will plan for sequential, not simultaneous, application of military force allowing a reduction in force structure. The requirement for simultaneous operations in the maritime strategy requires a naval force structure linked to 15 carrier battle groups. The shift to sequential operations is estimated to require only 12 carrier battle groups, with a potential savings in excess of \$10 billion.¹⁰ With regard to carrier battle groups, while aircraft carrier vulnerability must remain a serious concern, the crux of the matter is the "burden of their [aircraft carrier] protection." Is it cost-effective to have "roughly \$8 billion worth of ships and aircraft" to protect the aircraft carrier which can carry the fight to the enemy with "only 10 medium A-6s and 24 lighter A-7s"?¹¹ The other side of this argument, of course, is the value provided by naval presence and force projection capability. Given these arguments and allowing for a long transition period, the final Navy force mix will be 10 carrier battle groups and 2 surface action battle groups.

It is clear that the Air Force will be smaller in the future and based almost exclusively within the United States. Given the need to rapidly project military power, the Air Force must be structured around fast strategic airlift (e.g., C-17), deployable tactical air force assets, conventional bomber with

standoff munitions (as discussed in the section on nuclear war), and strategic refueling assets.

It is essential that as forces shrink, we provide the most realistic training possible and be prepared to accept the inherent accident cost. We will not be able to afford to learn in combat. Initial combat losses will make the difference between victory and defeat.¹²

Other Elements of National Power

The military is only one of three elements of national power. The other two elements, economic and political, also have a place in this national defense strategy. As discussed earlier, we must make wise use of these elements of national power before we choose to use military force. In fact, the use of the military must be the option of last resort.

Adam Smith, Alexander Hamilton, and Friedrich List "all understood that military power is built upon economic foundations. . . ." ¹³ It is essential that the basic economic foundation of this country remain strong. The deficit must be brought under control for "military strength is, in part, a product of economic forces." ¹⁴ If we get our own house in order, we can do more in the international arena with regard to nation building and ensuring stability in the various regions of the world. "General Omar N. Bradley, for years preached a similar gospel of strength, not through arms but through economic well-being." ¹⁵

As we discussed in chapter 4, most of the threats to our national interests in the future will be in the form of economic challenges. We must recognize that competition in the marketplace and competition for critical, scarce natural resources will do nothing but get tougher. We have a choice to make. As a society, we can sit and complain about how none of the foreign countries are playing fair, or we can stand up and start moving again. There is no reason that we cannot out work and out think any of our competition. Indeed, the future depends on us and our attitudes. We must work hard to ensure that we remain competitive or this nation will certainly be left behind.

Last, but not least, we must acknowledge that the drug war, if it is going to be won, must be won in the United States, not in some foreign country. "The experience of history brings ample evidence that the downfall of civilized states tends to come not from the direct assaults of foes but from internal decay."¹⁶

Summary and Call for Action

Throughout history the great military philosophers, thinkers, and strategists have acknowledged the power in choosing the right military strategy. The ancient Chinese sage, Sun Tzu observed: "For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill."¹⁷ Belisarius,

the great cavalry general of the Byzantium emperor Justinian (527-565) advised: "The most complete and happy victory is this: to compel one's enemy to give up his purpose, while suffering no harm oneself."¹⁰

It is essential that we take action now before pure budget considerations drive force structure decisions without regard to the design of a coherent defense strategy. The Congress must be convinced of the "rightness" of both the long term strength of our strategy and the value of the proposed force structure in support of this strategy. In no other way will funds be allocated to ensure there is an adequate force structure for the future.

We must take positive action to ensure that we maintain our position as the leading world power. We must convince both our allies and potential adversaries that our national interests are clear, our resolve is unshakeable, and the elements of national power that we are prepared to bring to bear are more than adequate to ensure that our national interests are served.

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